

## EDUCATING CHILDREN

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I had a chance to speak before the National School Board Association yesterday. Sometimes it is only when you speak that you realize how strong your conviction is on an issue. I have come to the floor of the Senate to make an appeal to all Senators, starting with Democrats.

The President, in his inaugural speech, talked about leaving no child behind. And the President, in his education proposal, also spoke about leaving no child behind. I think that is a wonderful value and a wonderful vision for our country. That, by the way, is the mission of the wonderful organization called the Children's Defense Fund headed by Marian Wright Edelman.

If we look at the arithmetic of the President's tax cut he is proposing this week for the country, and if we are to stay true to the theme of accountability—the President in his education proposal called for accountability—I would like to hold the administration accountable on the floor of the Senate, and with amendments and with debate, in what I think is going to be a historic debate.

The non-social Security surplus—putting the Social Security trust fund aside—is \$3.1 trillion. President Bush calls for \$1.6 trillion in tax cuts. The argument is: There is \$1.5 trillion left. What is the problem?

The problem is, first of all, when you look at the \$1.6 trillion and when you look at the \$3.1 trillion surplus, it is not really that, because we all know the Medicare trust fund money will be kept separate, and now all of a sudden \$3.1 trillion in surplus becomes \$2.6 trillion. When you add to that the tax extenders—the tax credits that we all know will be extended—and the payments that will go to farmers and other groups of citizens in our country, we are now down to \$2 trillion. And when you understand that there will be Social Security trust fund solvency issues, which, if we do not deal with those issues, will mean that either benefits are cut or the age eligibility goes up, it may be less than \$2 trillion. That is \$2 trillion.

On the other side of the equation, the \$1.6 trillion in tax cuts—once you now understand that we will no longer be paying down part of the debt, and interest payments go up—becomes \$2 trillion—\$2 trillion and \$2 trillion—\$2 trillion in tax cuts, only really \$2 trillion in surplus; and there will be no resources for our investment to leave no child behind. There will be no resources.

So the only thing you have is a proposal, A, with vouchers, which I think is a nonstarter and I think ultimately will be discarded. Then what you have is telling States and school districts: You do tests every year, starting at age 8—third grade—all the way up to eighth grade. But we are setting the schools and the children and our teachers up for failure because we are not

providing any of the resources to make sure that all of those children will not be left behind and will have an opportunity to achieve.

Fanny Lou Hamer is a great civil rights leader from the State of Mississippi. She once uttered the immortal words: I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired.

I am sick and tired of symbolic politics with children's lives. Where in this budget, where in the arithmetic of the tax cuts and the surplus, will there be the investment to make sure that no child is left behind?

Two percent of all the children who could benefit from Early Head Start, 2 years of age and under, benefit today. That is all we have funded.

With only 50 percent of Head Start, only 10 percent for good child care for low-income families, much less middle-income families, when are we going to fully fund the IDEA program, which we made a commitment to school districts and States to do? Not in this budget. Not in this budget.

I say to Senators and, in particular, since the majority leader is on the floor, to Democrats, it is extremely important that we have a civil debate, but it should be a passionate debate. We ought not to believe that in the call for bipartisanship, we should not as Senators speak up for the values and the people we represent. On present course, the best we are going to get is a decade; if we fold and if we do not challenge the tax cut proposals and the plan of this administration, the best we will get is not one dollar for investment in children, in education, in health care, in prescription drug costs; and the worst we will get is deficits going up again.

I would like to, as a Democratic Senator from Minnesota, make three suggestions:

A, we should hold the President and this administration accountable for the words, "leave no child behind." I take that seriously. I don't let anybody get away with saying my goal and my value and my vision is to leave no child behind, when I see only a pittance, if that, of investment in the health and skills and intellect and character of our children so we leave no child behind.

B, Democrats ought to be able to present a set of tax cuts which do not provide the vast majority of the benefits to the top 1 or 5 percent of the population. A lot of what President Bush is unfolding this week doesn't add up. You have the waitress, the single parent, making \$23,000 a year with two children. She is not helped, because the tax cuts are not refundable. These tax cuts overwhelmingly go to the most affluent and powerful citizens. We should be able to present a clear alternative.

Finally, I would be willing to debate anybody, anywhere, anytime, anyplace over tax cuts that go to the very wealthy versus prescription drug costs for elderly people. You don't do that on the cheap. I would be willing to debate

anybody on tax cuts that go to wealthy, high-income citizens versus expanding health care coverage for the 44 million people who have no health insurance at all. I would be willing to debate anybody over tax cuts going primarily to wealthy people versus doing more for children, so when they come to kindergarten they really are ready to learn.

If we can't stand for these values and can't have this debate, then what in the world do we stand for? One more time, I summarize: The \$3.1 trillion becomes about \$2.6, \$2.7 trillion right away, because we are not going to touch the Medicare trust fund money, nor should we. Then we all know we are going to extend the tax credits. So all of a sudden it is about \$2 trillion. And the \$1.6 trillion in tax cuts automatically, once we understand we now have to pay the interest that we wouldn't have paid if we were paying down the debt, goes to \$2 trillion.

Where is going to be the investment in the children? Where is going to be the investment in education? Where is going to be the investment so that we make sure no child is left behind? When are we going to do something about the fact that we have the highest percentage of poor children among all the western European and all the advanced economies in the world? When are we going to do something about the fact that single elderly women also are among the poorest citizens in our country? Where is going to be the investment

You don't proclaim the goal of leaving no child behind and then expect to do this on a tin cup budget. That is all we are getting from this President and his priorities. It is time for debate on the floor of the Senate about the priorities of our country.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). The majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I believe the time is reserved for the next hour or 40 minutes or so for the Democratic leadership. Since there is no Democrat seeking recognition at this point, I yield myself time out of my leader time to make some brief remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## THE BUDGET

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I look forward to the debate the Senator from Minnesota was discussing. I agree; just because we should and will have a civil debate doesn't mean we should not have that debate and lay out our differences of opinion very aggressively and passionately. I look forward to doing that.

The good news today, while there is a lot of gloom and doom in certain corners, is that tax relief is on the way for working Americans. They deserve it. We have a tax surplus, \$5.6 trillion in overpayment by the American people.

Now, we will argue over exactly how that \$5.6 trillion tax surplus should be